

To: Committee on Tourism, Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources

Attn: Chairman - Rep. J Sheltroun

Re: Hearing on HB 4610 " Right to Ride " legislation.

Mr. Chairman and other Distinguished Representatives on this Committee, thank you for this opportunity to present some of my personal information , observations and concerns.

My wife and I are in our late 70's and have resided in Michigan our entire lives. We enjoy many outdoor activities, the serene atmosphere and relaxing beauty Michigan forests and fields provide. My wife has been riding horseback for over 70 years and myself for over 50. We plan to ride our horses as long as we can, with some modern camping conveniences for comfort in bad weather.

We are members of 3 equine riding associations;

Waterloo Horsemen's Association (WHA). We ride here regularly.

WHA. adopted the State owned Waterloo Trail Camp, where

- It installed 6 - cement and wood manure pits,
- I as a member clean the pits 4 to 5 times a year with my tractor,
- it purchased and maintains 6 wheel-barrows for manure collection,
- it does an annual spruce-up and repair of the campground of the picket areas, hitch rail and bulletin board,
- it provides trail maintenance thru an adopt a trail program. My wife and I maintain about 1 ½ mile of trail.
- it has 1 or 2 work bees a year for the more extensive trail repairs, with purchased or donated materials, member provided equipment and lots of volunteer labor hours.
- the club also contributed ½ the cost to purchase the new durable intersection hiking and equine trail maps. We also installed the maps.

***WHA interaction with DNR Parks and Recreation personnel has been outstanding. Communication and co-operation I believe are the important factors for success.

Michigan Trail Riders Association (MTRA). We ride several times a year and have helped with a few work bees.

MTRA also uses an adopt a trail program.

- it also developed a " donation or donate your returnables " to help pay the " headcount fee for small children, unbelievably down to a baby in a bassinet.

Michigan Back Country Horsemen (BCHMI)

New grass roots member and supporter.

Pigeon River Country State Forest change effects.

The Waterloo Horsemens Association had arranged an annual member camp out for 7 years at the Elk Hill Group Campgrounds in the Pigeon River Country State Forest under the "Group Camp Permit "method.

* The new " Event Permit System ", implemented has locked us out of this much enjoyed vacation. The required bond and liability insurance requirement has effectively locked us out. Having put our financial support into the State Waterloo trail Camp, and needing to hold some financial reserves for emergencies, puts the additional expense beyond our reach.

We might have used the Satellite camps, but they are closed to equine camping.

That left us with the Public Equine Camp, which being an older camp, does not have the clearances for the larger units.

THE COMBINATION WAS FOUND TO BLOCK MOST USAGE OF THS AREA.

* NOTE - All forest access was shut down and only road riding is now allowed. People came to this area to relax, not face the hazard of having their horses pelted with stones by vehicles passing on the gravel roads! WHAT A SHAME TO HAVE SUCH A BEAUTIFUL PUBLIC AREA, TAKEN AWAY BY A FEW PEOPLE, WHO ARE BEYOND BEING HELD ACCOUNTABLE BY THE PUBLIC.

They did such a great job designing a trail system, there is no access to water for horses.

In 2008 while there I saw and took some pictures of elk in camp between 6 and 7 am, across the drive from an occupied campsite, 7 of the 10 days

we were camped there. I see we really scare the elk. My wife and I have set on our horses while elk grazed around us.

The erosion I saw was on game trails use by the elk when they herd up.

**** I do have a question - Since Michigan has the " Equine Activity Liability Act ", why do we have to have additional insurance? We are not having a competitive, fund raising, profit making activity, or selling anything, only friends camping. (to me this borders on discrimination).**

**I have a few serious concerns,
The movement by special interest groups to get the DNR Forestry Division to set regulations blocking other users access.**

Actions by DNR Forestry, closing more areas, thus increasing use and damage to the remaining open areas.

Lets have the DNR set a minimum age for head count fee charges between 6 to 10.

**I have heard many citizens complain of loss of use of public lands which is causing excessive use on those still open.
YOU DON'T USE A SINGLE EXIT TO VACATE A STADIUM.
THE DOT DOES NOT USE A SINGLE ROAD TO MOVE TRAFFIC**

Lets get the DNR to set down and work with the citizens in developing plans .I am sure there are many knowledgeable groups out there who would work closely with the DNR and assist in development and construction of facilities to promote our greatest resource, OUR OUTDOORS AND FORESTS. In this economically stressed time we need to co-operate and work together to help our neighbor survive.

ADVERTISE AND PROMOTE MICHIGANS RESOURCES

IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP, PASS ' HB 4610 , then we can work for other user groups.

THIS IS THE PUBLIC'S LAND, LET THE CITIZENS USE IT!

The information I have presented is mostly my own experiences ,a few are repeating conditions revealed to me.

In closing, My wife and I have been asked at least a dozen times a year " how old we are ?", the riders say they want to know how long they will be able to ride?

I HOPE AND PRAY TO GOD, THEIR PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES AND AGE ARE THE ONLY REASON TO STOP THEM FROM RIDING, NOT THE UNAVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC LANDS.

Respectfully - Ronald Beyer
8667 Waterloo Munith Rd
Grass Lake , Mi 49240

Ph - 734 475 - 1037

ATTENTION - HORSE OWNERS

STOP THE LOSS of EQUINE TRAIL CAMPS and HORSE TRAILS in Michigan !

Ongoing research has revealed a **significant loss by closing or severely limiting** equine trail camps, equine riding trails and open forest areas.

Support “ **MICHIGAN BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN’S** “ groups effort to get “ **RIGHT TO RIDE** “ **legislation** enacted for Michigan.

A Legislative Hearing on House Bill **HB 4610** (Right to Ride) is scheduled for **April 28,2009 at 10:30 am** in Lansing, at the Anderson House Building (across the street from the Capitol).The **Committee on Tourism, Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources**, chaired by Joel Sheltrown, will be conducting the hearing.

Come to the hearing to show your support.

You may also, get more information, **Sign a Petition** and **give comments**, by logging onto **bchmi.org**.

Please respond before April 28th and **contact your local legislator !**

I am a Trail Rider in my late 70s and have seen the effects of some of the restrictive actions. My wife and I both want to ride as long as we can, but do like some conveniences and have a significant investment in a diesel truck and trailer. Camping restrictions have limited where we can now go. If we want to help our economy, we should be encouraging and expanding Equine Tourism, not reducing it.

I see **Ford, Dodge and Chevrolet** trucks pulling these trailers. **We supported Michigans Automotive Industry, ** Lets get Michigan to support us **.**

Respectfully — Ron Beyer
BCHMI member and supporter